

DOCKET ITEM 06-34

RENTON AUTO DEALERS OUTSIDE THE AUTO MALL IN THE CA ZONE

ISSUE: Should small vehicle sales be allowed outside of the Auto Mall?

RECOMMENDATION: Small vehicle sales should be limited to the Auto Mall within the CA zone.

BACKGROUND: Currently, small vehicle sales are allowed in four City zones: Industrial-Light (I-L), Industrial-Medium (I-M), Industrial-Heavy (I-H) and Commercial Arterial (CA). These zones implement the land use designations Employment Area-Industrial (EA-I), Employment Area-Valley (EA-V) and Commercial Corridor (CC). Small vehicle sales are defined in RMC 4-11-220 and include the sales of “Motor vehicles, motorcycles, passenger cars, light trucks, vans, and similar size vehicles which have gross vehicle weights less than ten thousand (10,000) pounds.” There is also category of use for large vehicle sales, which is defined as vehicles and equipment greater than 10,000 pounds, but location of these uses is not the subject of this review.

The purposes of the various industrial districts, as stated in 4-2-020 do not specifically mention auto oriented uses. I-H is supposed to be for high intensity manufacturing and fabrication. I-M is intended for manufacturing, processing, assembly, and warehousing. I-L is oriented toward low intensity manufacturing, industrial services, distribution, storage, and technical schools. A few compatible uses that serve industrial uses are permitted in each of these zones, as are a few transitional uses compatible with service, retail, and office uses in adjacent zones. Comprehensive Plan policies on Employment Areas (Objectives LU-XXX and LU-YYY) and the EA-I and EA-V land use designations (Objectives LU-ZZZ and LU-AAAA) discuss securing current and future employment opportunities in industrial and high technology fields. There is no clear policy support for either allowing or prohibiting small vehicle sales, nor is there support for an auto mall concept, in the City’s industrially zoned or Employment Area designated areas. Further consideration of the policies related to small vehicle sales in the Employment Areas should be subject to review at the level of the Comprehensive Plan.

Both the purpose of the CC land use designation in the Comprehensive Plan, and the purpose of the CA zone in RMC 4-2-020 describe these districts as ideally evolving from strip commercial development to cohesive and well designed business districts. Objective LU-EEE specifically includes auto dealers as part of the CC land use designation and there are policies specifically written for the Auto Mall district. Specifically, Objective LU-KKK supports concentrating auto and vehicle related businesses into a single, cohesive district. Thus, City policies support limiting such uses to the Auto Mall district, but not necessarily allowing them in all parts of the CA zone within the CC land use designation.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE: This change complies with the Comprehensive Plan policies for the Renton Auto Mall, which call for a single, cohesive

district for the concentration of auto and vehicular related businesses (Objective LU-KKK).

CONCLUSION: Limiting small vehicle sales to the Auto Mall district implements existing policies to create a cohesive commercial auto district. Further review of auto sales in the Employment Areas should be considered during the next Comprehensive Plan update.